

## **Maryland Plan to Eliminate Health Disparities**

### **“ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES”**

#### **Committee Charge**

December 2004

Preface: The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has been given the responsibility, by legislation to undertake tasks that will reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities in the state. To this end, the Department is developing a statewide plan with broad input and partners.

A large body of research reveals that racial and ethnic minorities experience a lower quality of health services and are less likely than White Americans to receive even routine medical procedures. Systems should be developed to promote the consistency and equity of quality care for all patients. Full use of evidence-based guidelines and treatment protocols will go a long way toward raising the standard of care that is received by all.

Charge: The “*Access to Quality Health Services*” committee is charged with identifying innovative methods for increasing the quality of, and access to preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services to eliminate health disparities and raise the health status of all Marylanders.

The Committee is asked to submit a report of recommendations to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene by June 30, 2005

Methods: The Committee may use a variety of planning tools:

- A. Conduct wide research to discover innovative approaches,
- B. Invite expert speakers from federal, state and private sector programs that are addressing the reduction of health disparities,
- C. Investigate the economic burden of substandard health services and identify measures to track quality,
- D. Seek “Best Practices” that have been used in other settings for raising the standards of health services, and
- E. Identify new approaches that work.

***“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”***